

1. A method for controlling the use of a portable communications device in a vehicle comprising

deriving information relating to the geographic location of said personal communications device,

deriving information relating to restrictions on the use of personal communications devices in each of a plurality of geographic regions,

determining whether said geographic location of said personal communications device bears a predetermined relationship to at least one of said geographic regions,

determining restrictions on use of said personal communications device while said predetermined relationship exists.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said deriving information relating to the geographic location of said personal communications device comprises deriving information from a global positioning satellite (GPS) receiver.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein said GPS receiver is included in said personal communications device.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein said GPS receiver is included in said vehicle.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein said deriving information relating to said regions comprises accessing a database comprising geographical definitions of a plurality of regions and restrictions applicable to personal communications device use in each of said regions.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said restrictions comprise legal restrictions imposed by a governmental authority.

7. The method of claim 5 wherein said use of a personal communications device is pursuant to an arrangement with a communications carrier, and said restrictions comprise restrictions imposed by a customer of said carrier.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein said customer is a user of said personal communications device.

9. The method of claim 7 wherein said customer is a person having supervisory responsibility for at least one user of said personal communications device.

10. The method of claim 5 wherein said restrictions further comprise restrictions imposed by a user or a person having supervisory responsibility for at least one user of said personal communications device.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of regions comprises all regions in a governmental jurisdiction.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein said determining whether said geographic location of said personal communications device bears a predetermined relationship to at least one of said geographic regions comprises determining at least one of said geographic regions that includes said geographic location of said personal communications device.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein said determining of restrictions on use of said personal communications device comprises selecting a predetermined set of restrictions from among those restrictions applicable within respective geographic regions in which said personal communications device is located.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein said selecting a predetermined set of restrictions comprises selecting said predetermined set of restrictions subject to at least one condition.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein said at least one condition comprises an exemption from restrictions on use of said personal communications device for originating predetermined classes of communications.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein said predetermined classes of communications comprises emergency communications.

17. The method of claim 15 wherein said at least one condition comprises an exemption from restrictions on use of said personal communications device for receiving predetermined classes of communications.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein said predetermined classes of communications comprises emergency communications.

19. The method of claim 1 wherein said personal communications device comprises a wireless communications device for communicating with at least one fixed-location communications node.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein said at least one fixed-location communications node comprises a node of a terrestrial communications network, said network having a plurality of communications nodes.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein said deriving information relating to the geographic location of said personal communications device comprises receiving location information from at least one of said communications nodes.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein said fixed-location communications node comprises a short-range transmitter transmitting message information identifying the location of said fixed-location communications node.

23. The method of claim 20 wherein said fixed-location communications node comprises a wireless base station transmitter, and said deriving information relating to restrictions on the use of personal communications devices in each of a plurality of geographic areas comprises receiving message information from said wireless base station relating to restrictions applicable in at least one region proximate said wireless base station.

24. The method of claim 23 wherein said receiving said message information from said wireless base station relating to restrictions on use of personal communications devices occurs at said personal communications device, and wherein said deriving information relating to the geographic location of said personal communications device comprises receiving global positioning satellite (GPS) information from a GPS receiver included in said personal communications device.

25. The method of claim 24 further comprising imposing restrictions on use of said personal communications device in response to said determining of restrictions on use of said personal communications device while said predetermined relationship exists.

26. The method of claim 23 wherein said receiving said message information from said wireless base station occurs at said vehicle, and wherein said deriving information relating to the geographic location of said personal communications device comprises receiving global positioning satellite (GPS) information from a vehicle-based GPS receiver.

27. The method of claim 26 further comprising imposing restrictions on use of said personal communications device in response to said determining of restrictions on

use of said personal communications device while said predetermined relationship exists, said imposing being effected by sending a control message from a vehicle-based transmitter to said personal communications device.

28. A method for controlling the use of at least one portable communications device in a vehicle, the method comprising

at a controller in said vehicle, deriving information relating to the geographic location of said vehicle,

at said controller in said vehicle, deriving information relating to restrictions on the use of personal communications devices in at least one geographic region,

at said controller in said vehicle, determining whether said geographic location of said vehicle bears a predetermined relationship to at least one of said geographic regions,

transmitting a message from said controller in said vehicle to said at least one personal communications device imposing restrictions on use of each said personal communications device while said predetermined relationship exists.

29. The method of claim 28 wherein said deriving information relating to the geographic location of said vehicle comprises deriving information from a global positioning satellite (GPS) receiver in said vehicle.

30. The method of claim 28 wherein said deriving information relating to said regions comprises accessing a database comprising geographical definitions of a plurality of regions and restrictions applicable to personal communications device use in each of said regions.

31. The method of claim 30 wherein said restrictions comprise legal restrictions imposed by a governmental authority.

32. The method of claim 30 wherein said use of a personal communications device is pursuant to an arrangement with a communications carrier, and said restrictions comprise restrictions imposed by a customer of said carrier.

33. The method of claim 32 wherein said customer is a user of said personal communications device.

34. The method of claim 32 wherein said customer is a person having supervisory responsibility for at least one user of said personal communications device.

35. The method of claim 28 wherein said plurality of regions comprises all regions in a governmental jurisdiction.

36. The method of claim 28 wherein said determining whether said geographic location of said vehicle bears a predetermined relationship to at least one of said geographic regions comprises determining at least one of said geographic regions that includes said geographic location of said vehicle.

37. A method for controlling the use of a portable communications device in a vehicle comprising

deriving information relating to the geographic location of said personal communications device,

accessing a network database to derive geographical definitions of a plurality of regions and restrictions applicable to personal communications device use in each of said regions,

determining whether said geographic location of said personal communications device bears a predetermined relationship to at least one of said geographic regions,

applying restrictions on use of said personal communications device while said predetermined relationship exists.

38. The method of claim 37 wherein said restrictions comprise legal restrictions imposed by a governmental authority, said method further comprising updating said network database to reflect changes in said legal restrictions.

39. The method of claim 38 wherein said updating said network database to reflect changes in legal restrictions comprises temporary changes reflecting conditions affecting operation of said vehicle.

40. The method of claim 37 wherein said restrictions comprise restrictions imposed by a person having supervisory responsibility over a user of said personal communications device, said method further comprising updating said network database to reflect changes in said restrictions imposed by said person having supervisory responsibility over a user of said personal communications device.